

Reference

PAKENHAM, R.H.W. 1979. *The birds of Zanzibar and Pemba*. London: BOU.

Drs Peter and Ursula Koehler, Korbinianplatz 1, 8045 Ismaning, Germany

Scopus 16: 115–116, April 1993

Received 29 March 1993

Nest record of the Collared *Apalis ruwenzorii* and description of a partial albino

The Collared *Apalis ruwenzorii* is endemic to the Albertine Rift Afromontane Region (Keith 1980). Hall & Moreau (1970), Britton (1980), Prigogine (1985) and Short *et al.* (1990) regard *A. ruwenzorii* as a species distinct from the Black-collared *Apalis pulchra*. They suggest that the two form a superspecies. *A. ruwenzorii* differs from *A. pulchra* mainly in that it has a paler grey collar and upperparts, is more rufous below, and lacks white outer tail feathers.

However, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1990) recently found that they were unable to distinguish between the songs of the two and that the two have similar behaviours. They prefer that *A. ruwenzorii* be considered a subspecies of *A. pulchra*—*A. pulchra ruwenzorii*.

In the Impenetrable (= Bwindi) Forest (321 km²) of southwestern Uganda (0°53'–1°08'S, 29°35'–29°50'E) *A. ruwenzorii* is common in the dense undergrowth of medium-altitude and montane forest from 1500–2800 m. On 6 April 1989 I found an *A. ruwenzorii* nest in the Impenetrable Forest. Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960, 1973) indicate that the nest and eggs are undescribed. Neither Brown & Britton (1980) nor the East Africa Natural History Society Nest Record Scheme have any breeding records for the species. The only published account of the nest and eggs of the species of which I am aware is that of Dowsett Lemaire (1990) for the Nyungwe Forest, southwest Rwanda. That nest, which held "two eggs, was found on 31 December 1989: it was a ball of moss with a lateral hole attached to a sapling of *Alchornea* at a height of 40 cm and partly concealed by *Impatiens* herbs. The two eggs measured 16 x 13 mm, and were whitish with pink-brown blotches."

It appears that the nest I found in the Impenetrable Forest is only the second known for the species and is the first for East Africa. It was located at an altitude of 2200 m on a ridge-top in open forest about 1.5 km north of Mubwindi Swamp. On three occasions an adult carried nest material into the nest but construction was obviously nearly complete. It was 1 m above the ground on the edge of an extremely dense clump of the shrub *Alchornea hirtella*. The nest was an untidy oval ball (wider at the bottom) of moss hung 8 cm below a branch by a thin strap of moss. The general appearance was a hanging purse. The outer part of the nest was entirely of soft, very loosely woven green moss. Fine, whitish lichen lined the entrance hole. Inside, interwoven with the moss, was a neat, tight bowl entirely of *Panicum* sp. grass stems. The entrance was located slightly more than half-way up the side of the nest.

The nest was surprisingly large for such a small (10-cm long) bird. The outside diameter and height, excluding the moss 'strap' from which it hung, were 12 cm and 23 cm respectively. The inside of the nest cup was 6 cm in diameter and 2.5 cm deep.

No egg was present when the nest was discovered but there was one inside on the next visit on 17 April. The egg, which was cold, was 17.4 x 12.2 mm, pure white with

very dark to very light red-brown specks. The specks, which covered about 20 per cent of the egg, were clustered towards the large end where they formed a distinct ring. On 8 May the nest was visited a third time: the egg was gone with no evidence of predation. I collected the nest and deposited it in the Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation, Ruhizha.

The Nyungwe Forest nest and egg seem to be like those described here. In general, they are similar to the nest and egg described for *A. pulchra* and a number of other *Apalis* species. Unlike the nest of *A. pulchra*, however, lichen was not a prominent nest material, and feathers were not used. The colouring of the egg was also quite different from that described for *A. pulchra*, matching exactly the description of Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960) for *A. murina* and *A. flavigularis*. The question is raised as to whether the observed differences in the nest and eggs of *A. ruwenzorii* and *A. pulchra* represent intra- or interspecific differences.

Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960, 1973) describe young *A. ruwenzorii* as duller than the adult, with the lower mandible horn-coloured. Fledgling *A. ruwenzorii* in the Impenetrable Forest fit this description. I noted that the gape, mouth, legs and feet are yellow.

In addition to my April 1989 nest record for *A. ruwenzorii*, Jan Kalina (unpubl. data) observed two adults with fledglings on 22 January 1989 (probable December clutch) and I saw two adults feeding two fledglings on 17 April 1989 (probable March clutch). Besides the December 1989 nest mentioned above, Dowsett-Lemaire (1990) also saw a pair feeding large fledglings in early October 1989 (probable August clutch) in Nyungwe Forest. Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960) give no breeding records for *A. ruwenzorii* but they indicate that *A. pulchra* breeds during March–July, and irregularly during December–January in the Kenya Highlands. Brown & Britton (1980) provide 11 breeding records for *A. pulchra* in the Kenya Highlands: May and June, and November and December. While there appears to be a strong trend for *A. ruwenzorii* and *A. pulchra* to breed during the two wet seasons (March–May and October–December), there are a few records for the drier months.

With the normally plumaged adult *A. ruwenzorii* at the 6 April 1989 nest, there was a second, aberrantly plumaged bird. It was probably a male and sometimes moved with the normal coloured one, probably a female, as the normal bird added nest material. The aberrant bird was pure white except for a faint, but definite, chestnut patch on its upper chest and some dark grey on the wings and tail. The feet, bill and eyes were normal for *A. ruwenzorii*. This bird was seen clearly off-and-on from a distance of about 2 m for about 30 min as it kept returning to the nest site. To my knowledge, no such partial albino has been recorded for either *A. ruwenzorii* or *A. pulchra*.

Acknowledgements

My field studies are supported primarily by the World Wildlife Fund and USAID. I thank the Uganda National Research Council, President's Office, Game Department and Forest Department for permission to work in the Impenetrable Forest. I am grateful to Dr Jan Kalina for her unpublished data and for comments on this note.

References

- BRITTON, P.L. (ED) 1980. *Birds of East Africa*. Nairobi: EANH.S.
- BROWN, L.H. & BRITTON, P.L. 1980. *The breeding seasons of East African birds*. Nairobi: EANH.S.

- DOWSETT-LEMAIRE, F. 1990. Eco-ethology, distribution and status of Nyungwe Forest birds (Rwanda). *Tauraco Research Report* 3: 31–85.
- DOWSETT-LEMAIRE, F. & DOWSETT, R.J. 1990. Zoogeography and taxonomic relationships of the forest birds of the Albertine Rift Afromontane Region. *ibidem* 3: 87–109.
- HALL, B.P. & MOREAU, R.E. 1970. *An atlas of speciation in African passerine birds*. London: Trustees of the British Museum (Natural History).
- KEITH, S. 1980. The avifauna of the Impenetrable Forest, Kigezi, Uganda with special reference to altitudinal distribution. *Proceedings IV Pan-African Ornithological Congress*: 159–167.
- MACKWORTH-PRAED, C.W. & GRANT, C.H.B. 1960. *African handbook of birds*. Series I, vol 2. *Birds of eastern and north eastern Africa*. London: Longman.
- MACKWORTH-PRAED, C.W. & GRANT, C.H.B. 1973. *African handbook of birds*. Series III, vol 2. *Birds of west central and western Africa*. London: Longman.
- PRIGOGINE, A. 1985. Conservation of the avifauna of the forests of the Albertine Rift, pp 277–295 in DIAMOND, A.W. & LOVEJOY, T.E. (EDS) *Conservation of tropical forest birds*. ICBP Technical Publication No. 4. Cambridge: ICBP.
- SHORT, L.L., HORNE, J.F.M. & MURINGO-GICHUKI, C. Annotated check-list of the birds of East Africa. *Proceedings of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology* 4: 61–246.

Dr Thomas M. Butynski, Impenetrable Forest Conservation Project, Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation, Box 4930, Kampala, Uganda

Scopus 16: 116–118, April 1993

Received 26 July 1991

Review

Avian systematics and taxonomy *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* Centenary volume (Supplement) 112A: 1–311, 1992. Edited by J. F. Monk, MD. Available from the BOC Hon. Secretary, Mrs A. M. Moore, 1 Uppingham Road, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6JB, England, price £32.00, which includes postage and packing.

The British Ornithologists' Club came into being in 1892 in order that prominent ornithologists in and around London could meet on a regular basis, dine and then exhibit specimens of new bird taxa as well as eggs; also, through the medium of the Club's *Bulletin*, provide an immediate outlet for publication of new names and descriptions introduced at the actual meetings. Following its founding, both the Club and many of its founders played a dominant role in the development of African ornithology, and that of other parts of the world as well, in the heyday of the British Empire. Hundreds of new bird species and subspecies from Africa alone were then described in the Club's *Bulletin*, affectionately known as the "Bull B.O.C.". The *Bulletin* continues to provide a noteworthy outlet for contributions on both avian systematics and taxonomy, and perhaps as many as 50 per cent of new species and subspecies still being unearthed and described to this day continue to be introduced to science in its pages.

It was natural that on the auspicious occasion of its centenary the Club should seek to draw attention to the major contribution the *Bulletin* has rendered—and continues to render—to ornithology by publishing two compact hardcover volumes, the present contribution being an anthology of specially invited articles by a range of well known international researchers dealing with all aspects of systematic and taxonomic work on birds. Some 23 authors participated, while the Editor, Dr Monk, provided a both timely and poignant epilogue in